

Synar Protocol for Indiana

Indiana has been conducting year-round enforcement inspections of tobacco vendors since 2000 through a program known as the Tobacco Retailers Inspection Program (TRIP). TRIP inspections use a protocol that was approved by CSAP allowing Indiana to use TRIP inspections as data for the Annual Synar Report. FDA inspections have also been included, beginning in January 2012. These inspections follow the same protocol except as noted.

Tobacco inspections follow a standard procedure:

1. A plain-clothes officer enters the store and assumes a position in view of the cashier while the youth remains in the car with an adult monitor.
2. The youth then enters the store and asks for a tobacco product (usually a popular brand of cigarettes, but boys will also at times ask for smokeless tobacco or cigars).
3. The youths do not carry any ID during an inspection. When asked their age they are to be honest and not try to coerce the clerk into a sale.
4. The youth and officer leave and return to the car after the inspection.
5. If the clerk declines to sell, the officer logs the outcome on the online reporting system and the team moves on to the next inspection.
6. If the clerk sold tobacco to the youth during a TRIP inspection, the officer returns to the store and completes the paperwork associated with a "Notice of Violation", then returns to the car and logs the outcome on the TRIP reporting system from a laptop in the car. If the clerk sells during an FDA inspection, the store is notified by a letter from the FDA.
7. For violations occurring during a TRIP inspection, the Prosecutor's Office of the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission takes responsibility for imposing a fine on the clerk and the store owner and follows up when there is a delay in payment. Fines occurring as a result of an FDA inspection are handled by the FDA Office of Enforcement and Compliance.

TRIP and FDA tobacco enforcement in Indiana results in roughly 800 enforcement inspections each month, or roughly 10,000 inspections each year. Indiana uses the following procedure to calculate violation rates:

1. The TRIP and FDA inspection records for a twelve-month period (October 1 through September 30) are used as a starting database from which to select inspections.
2. From this list of records, the "revisit" records are removed. These are repeat inspections routinely done within 30 days of an initial violation. These inspections rarely result in a violation because the store has recently received a fine from the initial violation. Therefore they might artificially reduce the violation rate.
3. The resulting list of inspections includes multiple visits to some stores in districts where inspection teams are out more frequently than in other districts. Only the initial inspection (that is not a revisit) to a given store is used for the Synar calculations.

Although the inspection list is the result of an undirected schedule of inspections, it is not technically a random sample in the statistical sense. However, since it is likely to include almost 90 percent of all eligible vendors, this dataset is considered to be a superior source of

information for the annual Synar report than a mere sample of under 1,000 as was previously used. SSES software allows for use of this type of sample and calculates the appropriate standard error and margin of error for the final report.

Detailed information about TRIP is available at <http://www.trip.indiana.edu/>.

Detailed information about the FDA Center for Tobacco Products is available at <http://www.fda.gov/tobaccoproducts>.